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**Workshop for the development of policy guidelines on  
Mainstreaming Gender into Disaster Risk Reduction**

**GENDER IN CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION**

**Geneva  
28-30 January 2008**

**[www.unisdr.org](http://www.unisdr.org)**



- ([www.latimes.com/media/photo/2007-10](http://www.latimes.com/media/photo/2007-10))

## Why do we need to address gender issues in climate change adaptation?

### ***BECAUSE CC ADAPTATION IS NOT GENDER-NEUTRAL***

- Women often suffer most from CC impacts: poorer, more vulnerable, less access to resources and services, victims of gendered division of labour, less liberty of migration, low visibility and decision-making power less, face violence in face of disaster/conflicts, inadequate attention for women's reproductive and sexual health.
- In order for adaptation strategies to be effective and sustainable, we need women to participate.
- Women's priorities and strategies integrated in CC adaptation results in more sustainability and fairness.



([www.globalpulsejournal.com/women\\_burden\\_conflict.jpg](http://www.globalpulsejournal.com/women_burden_conflict.jpg))

## What are the main concerns for gender in climate change adaptation?

- CC magnifies existing inequalities.
- Often mortality among women greater.
- Apart from physical and material losses, major psychosocial impacts.
- Women often most invisible in CC mitigation and adaptation.
- Esp. women's livelihoods are affected/loss of livelihood assets: agriculture, production changes, marketability; women slip deeper in poverty, inequality/marginalisation
- Women have fewer assets and less opportunities for addressing the problems (e.g. income, education and training).
- CC increases conflicts over resources.
- Relocation of people: severe impact on social (and ecological) support networks and family ties.
- Limited attention for women's livelihood adaptation strategies and their priorities; for women as key agents.



([www.bhopal.net](http://www.bhopal.net))



## What are the factors that have caused those concerns?

- Gender inequality - women's status: poverty, lack of assets, lack of education, unequal access to information.
- Women's livelihood systems and multiple tasking (incl. food producers and providers, guardians of family health, care givers, educators, informal economy).
- Lack of gender-specific data and indicators (lack of institutional capacity to deal with gender issues/gender-specific approach).
- Lack of gender-specific adaptation policies and strategies: lack of information and not enough attention for women's priorities.
- Disaster chains : environmental change causes migration, which causes conflicts over resources; conflicts cause more violence against women.





([www.womankind.uk](http://www.womankind.uk))

## **What have organizations done to promote gender equality in climate change adaptation?**

- Information on gender – CC adaptation; undertaking gender analyses of CC adaptation strategies, gender-specific data.
- Advocacy for a gender approach in CC adaptation.
- Providing assets (credit, housing, agricultural inputs, technologies).
- Increasing community-based CC disaster preparedness and response plans.
- Training and empowerment of women.
- Opening up CC adaptation funds for women; prioritizing the adaptation needs of poor women.
- Support women's engagement in adaptation discussions.
- Making gender issues a common concern of men and women.



- ([www.vitalvoices.org](http://www.vitalvoices.org))

## **What were obstacles and lessons learned in promoting gender in climate change adaptation?**

- Lack of institutional capacity: institutional mechanisms have to be put in place; incl. at governmental levels; micro-macro linkages.
- Lack of gender analysis in CC adaptation; participatory research tools to explore the impact of CC on people's livelihoods.
- Women often only seen as victims/not as key agents: an adaptation plan that goes further and recognizes women's abilities and includes them in disaster relief efforts will help change gendered beliefs about women.
- Regressive cultural practices hinder women's capacity and ability to adapt.
- Ensure women's participation in decisions related to CC and support their access to capacity building (before, during and after disasters).
- Adaptation funds must play a key role in promoting women's rights.



([www.worldproutassembly.org](http://www.worldproutassembly.org))



## What should be our future focus in gender in climate change adaptation?

- I. **Ensure that CC risk reduction is a national and local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation.**
  - Strengthen gender awareness and mechanisms in institutions dealing with CC risk reduction.
  - Promote participatory approaches in CC adaptation.
- II. **Identify, assess and monitor CC risks and enhance early warning**
  - Involve local women in CC risk assessment and monitoring.
  - Strengthen women's capacity in CC early warning
  - Ensure women's access to CC risk information.
- III. **Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels.**
  - Support participatory research to explore gender aspects of CC adaptation strategies.
  - Strengthen poor women's capacity building, as well as their access to assets.
  - Involve men in these efforts.



([www.mayanfamilies.org](http://www.mayanfamilies.org))



#### **IV. Reduce the underlying CC risk factors**

- Enhance gender equality policies, legislation and strategies.
- Ensure that women participate in decisions relating to CC adaptation.
- Strengthen poor women's livelihood opportunities, incl. ecological resilience.

#### **V. Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels**

- Take women's physical, psychological, social and economic vulnerabilities into account in community-based disaster preparedness and response plans.
- Adaptation funds must play a key role in promoting women's rights.

***THANK YOU!***

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(Dick van Aalst)